

# Genocide and its Aftermath in Rwanda

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My STEP project was the Genocide and its Aftermath in Rwanda education abroad program in the Sociology department.

## Components of this program include:

- Lectures in the classroom focusing on Rwanda's cultural, political, social, and colonial history, the genocide, and how it has developed and changed since 1994
- Talks and testimonies from Rwandans who survived the violence of the genocide, rescued others, and participated in it
- Exploration of cities: Kigali, Huye, and Gisenyi
- Visiting of memorials, a research institution, government offices, co-ops, universities, Lake Kivu, Nyungwe rainforest, Akagera National Park on a safari, and other landmarks
- Homestay with a host family for one week



## Why did I choose this project?

- Previously studied the 1994 genocide in Rwanda; sought to gain a more in-depth understanding of the conflict and how the country has since developed and addressed ethnic animosity
- Interest in the influences of colonialism
- To learn how power and inequality create conflict
- To understand how racial and ethnic differences can trigger violent aggression and atrocity
- To explore a country I have not had the opportunity to travel to



## Impact of Experience

### Academic:

- Rediscovered my passion for learning about and appreciating diversity
- Learned about the significance of context and how values, cultural tradition, and institutions create distinct experiences
  - Became more critical of my Western viewpoint
- Understand the importance of accountability and responsibility to a greater degree and the difficulty in determining how best to come to terms with the past
- Sparked increased interest in the areas of identity, diversity, and human rights

### Personal:

- Engaged in thoughtful conversations with fellow humanities students, creating long-lasting close friendships
- Established relationships with my host family and continue stay in touch about our daily lives
- Navigated through an unfamiliar city giving me more confidence in doing things outside of my comfort zone

### Career:

- Recognized my interest in foreign policy, international law, and human rights
- Inspired goals to work for an NGO or in public policy in the realm of human rights and/or racial justice



## How was it transformational?

Through this experience, I grew in my passion for advocating for human rights, education surrounding diversity, and my desire to explore different cultures, regions, and ideologies. I was constantly surrounded by others who were excited to discuss humanitarian issues and ways to address the conflicts plaguing the world, inspiring me that positive change can come with learning and evaluating such experiences. While this program dealt with a rather difficult topic, I was able to talk through my thoughts and feelings with other students and my professor and engage with everyone on a deep and enriching level. Not only did I come away with knowledge about this region's history and development, but I got to explore its beauty and immerse myself in Rwanda's culture and traditions.



If you are interested in this education abroad program, contact Dr. Hollie Nyseth Brehm at [brehm.84@osu.edu](mailto:brehm.84@osu.edu)



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